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## National dress and the problem of authenticity in *Ulysses*

Throughout his life and work, James Joyce was interested in how the Irish presented themselves; in this article, I consider why he saw clothing specifically as having deeply symbolic resonance in constructions of national identity and how this is expressed in *Ulysses* (1922). In “Circe”, the fifteenth episode of the novel which is very much concerned with these issues, the minor character Paddy Leonard accuses Leopold Bloom, the novel’s hero, of being a “Stage Irishman!”.<sup>1</sup> Paddy Leonard’s comment does not appear at first to refer to Bloom’s clothes, wearing as he does “*a mantle of cloth of gold*” and “*green socks*”.<sup>2</sup> Yet implicit in the phrase “*stage Irishman*” is a recognition of the problem of (in)authenticity: if it is impossible to be authentic onstage, to have one’s “staged-ness” visible precisely because one is onstage, as the accusation suggests, is the opposite – that it is possible to be authentic off it – necessarily true? How might our understanding of “costume” change, according to whether clothes are worn on or offstage: at what point does “costume” become simply “national dress”? This article explores these issues and illustrates that by studying examples of Irish clothing in *Ulysses*, and thinking deeply about the metaphor of “costume”, we gain a new understanding of Joyce’s complicated relationship with the Revival. Particularly, this article shows the extent to which Joyce is alert to the political, cultural, and social contingencies of Irish clothing during the years of the Revival and how he uses clothes to express his deep skepticism surrounding ideas of national identity and belonging.

Using the language of the stage to unpick Joyce’s views on cultural identity requires clear terminology. Ordinarily, “costume” and “dress” constitute different categories of clothing: the first is limited to clothes worn in a dramatic context, while the second is typically used by scholars as a general term that includes sub-categories including “fashion”, “uniform”, “attire”, “garb”, and so on. In this article, however, I use the terms “costume” and “dress”

interchangeably, on the basis that Joyce understands these as the same thing: one may appear literally onstage, but, clothed in Irish costume, one also performs cultural, social, and political allegiances whether on or off stage. Joyce's depiction of dress demonstrates his belief in clothing's ambivalent relationship with identity, a recurring topic of interest throughout his work: recognising that Joyce was writing both in the wake of and in direct response to the Revival, a project that aimed to restore and sustain a coherent sense of cultural identity, makes more acute the tensions and ambivalences in his depictions of Irish dress.

Joyce's complicated relationship with Irish identity and the Revival is present all over his work, and it is especially fraught when it comes to clothing. Fashion and clothing are major topics in Joyce's texts: *Ulysses* opens with a scene of male grooming and dressing, and ends with Molly Bloom's extensive ruminations on her wardrobe; entire episodes ("Nausicaa") are devoted to fashion; specific garments have generated some of the most infamous textual puzzles in his work (who is the man in the macintosh? Why does Joyce mention goloshes nine times in "The Dead"?<sup>3</sup>). Importantly for Joyce, clothes are deeply unstable. They can be put on and taken off. They can undermine their wearer: stockings lose their grip, and buttons pop open (both occur in *Ulysses*).<sup>4</sup> They can be stained, lost, ripped, and shrunk. Crucially, they can mean very different things to different people in different circumstances. Such unpredictability makes it hard to pin down the exact meaning of a garment, which may change even more depending on who wears it, a feeling Stephen Dedalus, who declines the "secondhand breeks" offered him by Buck Mulligan, but does wear other items belonging to his friend, is well aware of.<sup>5</sup>

With these observations about clothes and cultural "performances" in mind, we should first observe how Joyce draws attention to the dress of his own country, which he

frequently does through a process of defamiliarisation. In *Ulysses*, Irish clothing is treated in a similar manner to those of the global East, and one distinctive feature of “Circe” is the volume of Eastern clothes it features, from Molly Bloom’s appearance in Turkish pantaloons, to the characterisation of Zoe Higgins as an odalisque, to John Eglington’s appearance in “*a mandarin's kimono of Nankeen yellow, lizardlettered, and a high pagoda hat*”.<sup>6</sup> Joyce’s depiction of Eastern clothing is, variously, sexist, parodic, racist, generalised (his conflation of the Japanese kimono with the Nankeen cloth of China), or neutral. Orientalizing attitudes permeate *Ulysses* but are not limited to the global East: R. Brandon Kershner has argued that “Irish Orientalism”, which he defines as “a construction of the British Empire but a locally mediated construction: an imperial dream of the East with an Irish accent” is a key feature of Joyce’s work.<sup>7</sup> Throughout his discussion of Joyce’s representation of the global East, Kershner’s account of Irish Orientalism is consistent with Edward Said’s famous definition of (Eastern) Orientalism, which situates the Orient as “less a place” than a “set of references, a congeries of characteristics, that seems to have its origin in a quotation, or a fragment of a text, or a citation from somebody else's work on the Orient, or some bit of previous imagining, or an amalgam of all these”.<sup>8</sup> To be clear, Kershner is not directly comparing Ireland with the East, but recognising the ways that cultural conceptions of the two align as a consequence of representation. Joyce both recorded and participated in a similar process in depicting his own country. In his study of Eastern dress, Adam Geczy has identified three modes of orientalist styling: assimilation; masquerade, repatriation, or re-identification; and inflection, inspiration, tokenism or galvanization (typically economic or political). Joyce moves along this spectrum with each Irish garment and outfit he includes in his work.<sup>9</sup>

In his 1892 speech “The Necessity for de-Anglicising Ireland”, Douglas Hyde discussed at length the need to assert Irish culture through dress:

Wherever the warm striped green jersey of the Gaelic Athletic Association was seen, there Irish manhood and Irish memories were rapidly reviving. There torn collars and ugly neckties hanging awry and far better not there at all, and dirty shirts of bad linen were banished, and our young hurlers were clad like men and Irishmen, and not in the shoddy second-hand suits of Manchester and London shop-boys. Could not this alteration be carried still further? Could we not make that jersey still more popular, and could we not, in places where both garbs [English and Irish] are worn, use our influence against English second-hand trousers, generally dirty in front, and hanging in muddy tatters at the heels, and in favour of the cleaner worsted stockings and neat breeches which many of the older generation still wear? Why have we abandoned our own comfortable frieze? Why does every man in Connemara wear home-made and home-spun tweed, while in the midland counties we have become too proud for it, though we are not too proud to buy at every fair and market the most incongruous cast-off clothes imported from English cities, and to wear them? Let us, as far as we have any influence, set our faces against this aping of English dress, and encourage our women to spin and our men to wear comfortable frieze suits of their own wool, free from shoddy and humbug. So shall we de-Anglicise Ireland to some purpose, foster a native spirit and a growth of native custom which will form the strongest barrier against English influence and be in the end the surest guarantee of Irish autonomy [... otherwise] we will become, what, I fear, we are largely at present, a nation of imitators, the Japanese of Western Europe, lost to the power of native initiative and alive only to second-hand assimilation.<sup>10</sup>

In suggesting the Irish might be seen as “the Japanese of Western Europe”, Hyde already recognised the possibility of Irish Orientalism. Yet despite his concern over the “aping” of

English dress, he failed to acknowledge the opposite possibility, that his zealous attitude to clothes might result in the aping of *Irish* dress too. While others used clothing as a metaphor for independence at this time – A.E. wrote that “We cannot put on the ideals of another people as a garment”, Michael Collins that “English civilization [is] fashioned out of their history. For us it is a misfit. It is a garment, not something within us” – Hyde was notably literal *as well as* metaphoric, urging tangible action within a striking piece of rhetoric.<sup>11</sup>

As this extract so clearly indicates, dress was an important aspect of the Revivalist movement. Since Sir John Perrot, the English governor of Ireland from 1584 to 1588, had banned the Irish wearing their native garments, the wearing of traditional garb stood for political, self-determining impetus (see, for example, Spenser’s discussion of the Irish mantle in *A View from the Present State of Ireland*).<sup>12</sup> Ireland has always had a strong linen trade but excessive taxation on wool, to the point of ruination, meant it had quite a primitive wool industry, even into the late-eighteenth century.<sup>13</sup> The legacy of this economic – and cultural – abasement could still be felt by Hyde and his fellow revivalists: in 1838, for example, 75% of the Irish population wore imported clothing.<sup>14</sup> By 1885, the Irish footwear industry supplied less than 25% per cent of the Irish market because of competition from cheap factory-produced footwear producers based in English cities, including Northampton, Stafford, Leeds, and Leicester.<sup>15</sup> By the turn of the century, the proportion of English-made footwear in Ireland rose to 90% (Mary Daly has suggested that the higher level of skill required in making traditional Irish style shoes increased their cost).<sup>16</sup> Irish department stores imported English ready-made clothing and from the 1860s this was being sold in Dublin at “low prices”.<sup>17</sup> English domination, as well as contextualizing this aspect of Hyde’s speech, also explains why there is relatively little scholarly work on the history of Irish dress.<sup>18</sup>

The Citizen in “Cyclops” – the twelfth episode of the novel, in which Joyce included discussions of nationalism, imperialism, and violence – is often mocked for his pomposity,

verbosity, and anti-Semitism. However, he is not wrong to complain of the damage the English did to the Irish trades:

Where are our missing twenty millions of Irish should be here today [sic] instead of four, our lost tribes? And our potteries and textiles, the finest in the whole world! And our wool that was sold in Rome in the time of Juvenal and our flax and our damask from the looms of Antrim and our Limerick lace, our tanneries and our white flint glass down there by Ballybough and our Huguenot poplin that we have since Jacquard de Lyon and our woven silk and our Foxford tweeds and ivory raised point from the Carmelite convent in New Ross, nothing like it in the whole wide world. Where are the Greek merchants that came through the pillars of Hercules, the Gibraltar now grabbed by the foe of mankind, with gold and Tyrian purple to sell in Wexford at the fair of Carmen? [...] What do the yellowjohns of Anglia owe us for our ruined trade and our ruined hearths? And the beds of the Barrow and Shannon they won't deepen with millions of acres of marsh and bog to make us all die of consumption?<sup>19</sup>

Joyce rehearsed parts of this speech in his 1907 lecture “Ireland, Island of Saints and Sages”, in which he noted “Ireland is poor because English laws destroyed the industries of the country, notably the woollen one” and that “Ireland used to make and export textiles to Europe generations before the first Fleming arrived in London to teach the English how to make cloth”.<sup>20</sup> For Joyce to reproduce, and then expand, these ideas 15 years later in *Ulysses* indicates that the cultural value of Irish fabrics was a point of sustained interest for him.

A range of projects were undertaken to redress this situation, beginning most famously with the Irish Industrial Exhibition of 1853, modelled on the 1851 Great Exhibition at Sydenham. One reviewer deemed the opening day “a great day for Ireland” and that the

Exhibition “has won for itself a name and distinction which cannot but be beneficial to the social, industrial, and political welfare of the people”.<sup>21</sup> A Jacquard loom for use with poplins was featured at the Exhibition (the loom, invented at the start of the nineteenth century, made it easier to work with patterns in tough fabrics).<sup>22</sup> Flax and Irish linen, both of which feature in the Citizen’s speech, were also on display.<sup>23</sup> As one reviewer of the Exhibition noted, the “introduction of home manufactures of this kind among the rural population of Ireland is of recent date”.<sup>24</sup> The article also recorded women’s work in this nationalist enterprise, with the author commenting that “it is gratifying to be able to record the fact of the rapid increase of the sewed muslin and lace work. In the province of Ulster the countrywomen and girls are almost universally busied with this kind of work” and that “throughout Connaught and Munster this branch of female industry is likewise happily extending”.<sup>25</sup> In the later-nineteenth century, state-backed projects undertook to build on this early success. Projects including the Congested District Boards aimed to revive traditional fabric- and dress-making techniques.<sup>26</sup> Much of this regenerative work was undertaken by upper- and upper-middle-class women, as these examples, and Janice Helland’s work on women’s engagement with the Donegal Industrial Fund and the Irish Industries Association, show.<sup>27</sup>

Against this historical backdrop, Joyce repeatedly depicted Irish clothing within dramatic contexts, signalling his belief that such dress stands as a performance of cultural identity, with little substance underneath the “costume”. In “Scylla and Charybdis”, the ninth episode of *Ulysses*, Buck Mulligan teases Stephen that “The tramper Synge is looking for you [...] He’s out in pampooties to murder you”, a joke alluding to the time the young Joyce arrived at a rehearsal of one of J. M. Synge’s plays so drunk he collapsed.<sup>28</sup> Many scholars have discussed this textual moment, recognising its importance to understanding the literary relationship between J. M. Synge and Joyce, but the significance of pampooties needs to be developed further. Pampooties are a slipper worn mostly in the west of Ireland and on the



Aran Isles.<sup>29</sup> They are made from cowhide and, as one mid-nineteenth century reporter noted, are “well adapted walking over the rocky enclosures”.<sup>30</sup> As a result they last only a few months under typical conditions.<sup>31</sup> While by the end of the nineteenth century they were overwhelmingly associated with the Aran Isles, the word “pampootie” itself is of Javanese origin, having been introduced by Dutch traders of the East India Company, thereby etymologically undermining the reception of them as authentic Irish items.<sup>32</sup> Synge had worn them while on the Aran Islands, but does not, in his 1907 account of his trip, pause at any point to explain to potentially unfamiliar readers what they actually are.<sup>33</sup> During his visit, Synge was highly attentive to the clothing of the islanders and claimed that “the simplicity and unity of [their] dress increases in another way the local air of beauty”<sup>34</sup>; in his written record of his trip, he repeatedly noted the red skirts and petticoats favoured by women.<sup>35</sup> His delight with the colour red is consistent with other contemporary reports of Aran Isles dress; colourised images of red skirts and dresses have recently become available.<sup>36</sup> This admiration for colour explains Mulligan’s quip to Stephen, in the same conversation, that “Synge has left off wearing black to be like nature”.<sup>37</sup> Pampooties appear throughout Joyce’s works: the Citizen wears similar “brogues of salted cowhide”; they are alluded to in *Finnegans Wake*; in “Oxen of the Sun”, “the figure of Bannon in explorer’s kit of tweed shorts and salted cowhide brogues contrast[s] sharply with the primrose elegance and townbred manners of Malachi Roland St John Mulligan”.<sup>38</sup> In the final example, the “explorer’s kit” alludes to the kind of (pseudo)-anthropological explorations of the West undertaken at this time, which both Synge and Joyce also engaged in.<sup>39</sup>

In “Scylla” pampooties are loaded with cultural symbolism because Synge wanted them to be worn onstage for the performances of *The Playboy of the Western World* at the Abbey Theatre in 1907. This was to the horror of Lady Gregory who, despite her extensive support for the Revivalist movement and so many of its writers, could not stand their smell, and

claimed “there is no object in bringing local smells into the theatre”.<sup>40</sup> For Synge, however, pampooties were the essence of the West. Whether their scent was as bad as Gregory claimed to fear is questionable: it is unlikely that their leather would start to smell unpleasant if being worn briefly and decoratively on stage rather than for hard, sweat-inducing labour, and it is improbable that the audience would have been able to smell anything at all. Nonetheless, if we are to take Gregory’s concern at face value, clothes that smell can produce intensely emotional responses, as she implicitly acknowledged; they may also contribute to a sense of authenticity through history, creating a conception of the garment *as worn* rather than belonging to a stage wardrobe cupboard in Dublin. The terms of her resistance to pampooties indicate the point at which their evoked authenticity (both “local” and “smells”) becomes too much, something self-consciously over-performed. Synge believed that clothes could encapsulate authenticity (he also brought kerchiefs especially from Athenry for the women to wear in a performance of *The Well of the Saints*); Gregory, that this particular *kind* of odorous authenticity was undesirable.<sup>41</sup> Yet would an audience – even that at the nationalist Abbey Theatre – really know, or care, where these particular pampooties came from? Geczy, in his reading of Eastern dress, has suggested that the “greatest insensitivities of decontextualizing non-Western designs occur” when “sacred or highly specific motifs are arbitrarily appropriated”.<sup>42</sup> Pampooties are, undeniably, specific to the Aran Isles and Joyce recognises their arbitrariness when appropriated outside this localised context: the stage facilitates their transition from regional dress to costume. On the Dublin stage, pampooties cannot, for Joyce or Gregory, represent regional dress proper but its hijacking by the likes of Synge, stretching their symbolism to breaking point.<sup>43</sup>

The tension between dress and costume is made even more explicit in “Circe”, an episode structured in dramatic form with stage directions, costume changes, and other theatrical features. Joyce’s view that traditional dress is a (cultural) performance can be gleaned from

the fact of so many instances of Irish clothing appearing in this episode: Irish Evicted Tenants appear “*in bodycoats, kneebreeches, with Donnybrook fair shilleaghs*”; John Wyse Nolan, who listens to the Citizen’s speech on Irish fabrics in “Cyclops”, quoted above, appears “*in Irish National Forester’s uniform, doffs his plumed hat*”.<sup>44</sup> The “End of the World” appears wearing “tartan fillibegs”, which Len Platt reads as Joyce’s joke at the mysticism of the Revival movement (a suggestion supported by the claim that it was an Englishman who invented “the feile beg”).<sup>45</sup> Theodor Purefoy appears dressed as an Aran Isles fisherman in “fishingcap and oilskin jacket”, of the sort documented by Synge on his trip (“In Aranmor many of the younger men have adopted the usual fisherman’s jersey”).<sup>46</sup> Joyce also noted this style of dress during his visit to the Islands, which he recorded in his article for the Italian newspaper *Il Piccolo*, “The Mirage of the Fisherman of Aran”: “[H]e wears a rough, flat sandal of oxhide, open at the shank, without heels and tied laces of rawhide. He dresses in wool as thick as felt and wear a black, wide-brimmed hat”.<sup>47</sup> (Murphy, the sailor Bloom and Stephen Dedalus meet in “Eumaeus”, also wears “an oilskin”.<sup>48</sup>) Joyce’s description of the pampooties and jumper of the fishermen seems to be recorded more sensitively in this article, in contrast to the explicitly satirical depiction of pampooties in *Ulysses*, but it is important to note that his article for the newspaper was written specifically for Italian readers. Joyce does not always, necessarily, mock traditional or Revivalist dress, but sees through the clothes and understands the cultural assumptions and contexts they are embedded in.

Bloom appears in Irish dress in “Circe”. Dr Dixon reports that he “wears a hairshirt [a shirt made of a rough fabric, worn usually by prisoners] of pure Irish manufacture winter and summer”, a character reference intended to be as humiliating as the accompanying revelations of Bloom’s habit of sleeping on straw litter.<sup>49</sup> He also appears in a “gansy”, a woollen jumper usually made of thick wool ideal for keeping fishermen warm, now commonly known as an Aran jumper.<sup>50</sup> This style, now internationally associated with

Ireland, has an uncertain history, though one explanation for the distinctive weave is that it was based on the fisherman's jumper in Synge's *Riders to the Sea* (1904).<sup>51</sup> Joyce may be alluding to this jumper, given his eventual fondness for the play: despite not liking it when he first read it in 1903, he later translated it and put the play on in 1918 while living in Zurich. His wife, Nora Barnacle, took part in the performance and posed for photographs in her elaborate costume.<sup>52</sup> Joyce's inclusion of the jumper in his work marks a further influence of his 1912 trip to Aran, and the clothes he saw there, in the writing of *Ulysses*. More than this, though, the style only became widely recognised as an Irish garment from the 1930s onwards, suggesting that Joyce did not use it as the potent symbol of Ireland, as refracted through mass consumer culture, that it is today.<sup>53</sup> Instead, it is testament to Joyce's deep feeling for the social lives of clothes that he was alert to the latent significance of the Aran jumper many years before it became the emblematic symbol of Ireland that is now is.

In Bloom's final appearance in Irish garb, he wears a "*caubeen with clay pipe stuck in the band, dusty brogues, an emigrant's red handkerchief bundle in his hand*".<sup>54</sup> Len Platt has suggested that Bloom here wears the dress of "an emigrant Irish peasant", a common character in Revivalist theatre, noting that for Bloom, becoming an Irish peasant is "the final humiliating degradation".<sup>55</sup> Platt's judgement, though accurate within his reading of revivalist theatre, is arguably limited. In depicting Bloom as an emigrant, Joyce asks the question of *who* can wear Irish costume. Who is the butt of the joke in this humorous image: Bloom, as an emigrant, or the clothes themselves, whose meaning fails to "carry" and have cultural status when worn by the wrong person? Joyce acutely exposes the fragility of national identity by latching onto its wardrobe and exposing the limited spaces in which it can convincingly be worn.

In "Cyclops", the Citizen derides Bloom as a "wolf in sheep's clothing [...] That's what he is. Virag from Hungary!".<sup>56</sup> He uses the idiom incorrectly – Bloom is an outsider, but

poses no threat – yet the Citizen’s use of the term nonetheless stresses the importance of clothes to the characterisation of each. Bloom, although not aware of the Citizen’s comment, mentally refashions the insult later in his interior monologue: “People could put up with being bitten by a wolf but what properly riled them was a bite from a sheep”.<sup>57</sup> Vincent Cheng claims, without noting the Citizen’s earlier use of it, that this latter example “invok[es] the amusing image of Bloom as a wolf in sheep’s clothing: for names and labels and stereotypes create imagined clothing: [sic] which does not reflect the actual specificities of individual and cultural differences”.<sup>58</sup> Cheng’s analysis, while suggestive, overlooks some of what is at stake in the repetition of the phrase. The second image, in (Jewish) Bloom’s head, is not “amusing” when contextualised against the anti-Semitism of “Cyclops”, which is in Bloom’s mind as he then goes on to rehearse one of the refrains of the episode, “your god was a jew [sic]”.<sup>59</sup> With anti-Semitism rife not only in *Ulysses* but in the wider culture in which the novel is set, this is a serious point. Cheng is also misguided in suggesting that “imagined clothing” has little cultural importance, overlooking that for Joyce, clothing has as much material potency as it does symbolic.

In his description of the Citizen’s dress, Joyce’s attention to detail appears to create an authentic Irish hero:

a long unsleeved garment of recently flayed oxhide reaching to the knees in a loose kilt and this was bound about his middle by a girdle of plaited straw and rushes. Beneath this he wore trews of deerskin, roughly stitched with gut. His nether extremities were encased in high Balbriggan buskins dyed in lichen purple, the feet being shod with brogues of salted cowhide laced with the windpipe of the same beast. From his girdle hung a row of seastones which jangled at every moment of [sic] his portentous frame and on these were graven with ruse yet striking art the tribal images of many Irish heroes and heroines of

antiquity [...] A couched spear of acuminate granite rested by him [...] a mighty cudgel rudely fashioned out of paleolithic stone.<sup>60</sup>

Elements of the Citizen's dress are congruent with descriptions of ancient Irish clothing in P. W. Joyce's *A Smaller Social History of Ancient Ireland* (1906), including the use of animal skin and the bright lichen purple.<sup>61</sup> Historian Joyce notes that a loose cloak reaching down to the knees was a common style for men; he records that "the girdles of chiefs and other high-class people were often elaborately ornamented".<sup>62</sup> The tunic is also consistent with its ancient style, when it was worn as a short coat, open at the throat and ending in plaits which hung from the chest to the girdle, but more often fitted with long sleeves.<sup>63</sup> In two ways, the outfit also suggests the Citizen's desire to be seen as a modern-day Cuchulain: one description notes him carrying a "lengthy spear, together with a keen aggression-boding javelin"<sup>64</sup>; he is sometimes mentioned as having worn deerskin.<sup>65</sup> The outfit is also consistent with descriptions of more recent Irish dress, from the sixteenth century.<sup>66</sup> As Declan Kiberd notes, too, the Irish "wore hip-hugging trousers long before the English (and were reviled for the barbarous fashion by the new invaders)".<sup>67</sup> Finally, at the start of the twentieth century, Balbriggan was "known around the world for the quality of its textile products".<sup>68</sup>

The tunic is another example of ancient dress, though maybe not Irish: Lindsay of Pitscottie, who wrote a chronicle of Scotland from 1437 to 1542, described the Scottish being "clothed with ane mantle, ane schirt, fashione'd after the Irish manner, going bare-legged to the knee"<sup>69</sup>, and some scholars believe that trews were originally a Scandinavian introduction to Ireland.<sup>70</sup> The kilt's national status is contestable too, having been designed by an English Quaker before being worn first by the Scottish.<sup>71</sup> As William Pinkerton noted, too, neither the "*trùis* nor the long, thickly-plaited shirt, or rather tunic, with hanging sleeves – an elegant and picturesque dress by the way – were peculiarly Irish", the second, like the Citizen's "long

unsleeved garment”, being a “general European fashion, about the close of the fourteenth century [...] which might have reached Ireland, through France or Spain, or have been adopted from the English in the reign of the second Richard”.<sup>72</sup>

Though the description of the Citizen’s outfit seems, on a first read, “authentic”, closer investigation of the details highlights, as seen, some parodic aspects.<sup>73</sup> How far does the Citizen “ape”, in Hyde’s terms, Irish dress? In addition to the above, this long, dense description is sandwiched between “Sirens”, the episode featuring two stylish barmaids, and “Nausicaa”, which depicts the fashion-obsessed Gerty MacDowell: Joyce’s implication is that ancient-style Irish garb is comically redundant to twentieth-century Dublin.<sup>74</sup>

(In)famously, many patently non-Irish heroes feature on the belt, on which Wolf Tone and Cuchulain rub up against Lady Godiva, Julius Caesar, The Man Who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo, and more.<sup>75</sup> Joyce’s caricature of “national” dress and its wearers, in this almost pantomimic example, is consistent with cultural commenters from 1904, one of whom described it as comprising “a distorted harp, a few caricatured shamrocks, and an Irish deerhound with a round tower beside him as though it were his kennel”, an image undeniably similar to the description in “Cyclops”, in which the Citizen has his dog Garryowen at his side the whole time.<sup>76</sup> As noted in the introduction to this article, Paddy Leonard accuses Bloom of being a “Stage Irishman!”; if Bloom is one, the Citizen surely is one too, his clothes visibly attempting, yet also failing, to reflect an authentic Irish heritage. Hyde’s concern about the “aping” of English dress is apposite but Irish dress, as the Citizen shows, can also be “aped”.

Among these “stage Irishmen” of Joyce’s fiction, who so explicitly carry Joyce’s skepticism surrounding national dress, are a smaller number of more subtly characterised “stage Irishwomen”.<sup>77</sup> Though she has generated a far smaller critical field than her male counterpart, the stage Irishwoman, another stage figure, was seen as “promiscuous, drunk, or

manly” when she deviated from “the ideal of pure Irish womanhood”.<sup>78</sup> Though this description does not accord with so many women in Joyce’s work, he does recognise that women’s nationalist affiliations were, like men’s, often culturally performed: like Douglas Hyde, Joyce heeded the important, active role of women in the Revival. Hyde made his dependence on women’s work within his project explicit (“encourage our women to spin”); in Joyce’s work their engagement with Irish dress is subtler, and often refracted through consumption.

Emer Nolan has commented in her work on Joyce and nationalism that “[N]ationalist movements are notorious not only for marginalizing women, but also for their extensive symbolic deployment of femininity, especially in the form of feminine or maternal images of the national territory”.<sup>79</sup> To this end, Mrs Kearney in “A Mother” – a story Kiberd has described as “the most lethal account of the careerism” of those involved with the Revival – buys Irish.<sup>80</sup> This is despite – indeed, because of – the fact that British products were dominant in colonised Ireland and clothes were among the consumer items that the British exported during these years.<sup>81</sup> Though Thomas Richards has suggested that there was a “lack of interest manifested by Celtic revivalists in the conditions and constitution of their material world”, revisionist work shows that Revivalists seized and created opportunities to use dress, fashion, and clothing to disseminate their aims further, as discussed above.<sup>82</sup> Immersed in an Irish-centric shopping culture, a niche within the British-dominated consumer landscape, Mrs Kearney makes sure that she buys Irish goods for her daughter. The Grafton Street department store Brown Thomas is where Mrs Kearney buys “some lovely blush-pink charmeuse” to “let into the front of Kathleen’s dress. It cost a pretty penny; but there are occasions when a little expense is justifiable”.<sup>83</sup> At the turn of the century, Brown Thomas “had claims to be the pre-eminent store in the city and Grafton street thus rose in stature from its reflected light”.<sup>84</sup> The store was a huge presence in the city, employing 300 people by the



1890s.<sup>85</sup> Its appearance in “A Mother” is culturally and politically significant in part because during the 1880s and 1890s, Brown Thomas operated a scheme in which it would buy a Parisian design and then command its own in-house seamstresses to recreate the dress or item, specifically using Irish fabrics and techniques.<sup>86</sup> This scheme provided employment for “up to 250 women” in Brown Thomas.<sup>87</sup> By 1903, the store was advertising its “Lucan and Connaught Tweeds” in the *Irish Times*.<sup>88</sup> Eventually promotion of Irish goods was a central feature not only of Brown Thomas but the upper-class department stores more generally.<sup>89</sup> This Brown Thomas scheme enabled aspirational middle-class shoppers like Mrs Kearney to buy the “authentic” homemade Irish product, yet not have to forsake glamour. Some mothers, though usually of younger children, made them Irish clothes and displayed these at Gaelic League meetings: Mrs Kearney’s literal stitching together a “costume” for Kathleen to wear and parade her Revivalist credentials may be an ironic, perverse allusion to this kind of nationalist activity, further indicating her overbearing nature and Kathleen’s infantilism.<sup>90</sup> “A Mother” illustrates how an Irish inflected consumer culture contributes to a literal and social performance of Irish “authenticity”.

Joyce’s knowledge of women’s engagement in the sartorial development of the Revival is also evident in “The Dead”. Molly Ivors, the acquaintance of Gabriel Conroy who criticises him for being a “West Briton!” – an equally loaded inversion of “stage Irishman” – wears “a large brooch which was fixed in the front of her collar [which] bore on it an Irish device and motto”.<sup>91</sup> This description is conspicuously vague, especially with the lack of detail of what the motto actually says. Marian Eide has suggested that the brooch “announces her nationalist allegiances with its traditional or heritage design”.<sup>92</sup> More specifically, Molly Ivors’ brooch is based on the famous Tara brooch, now kept at the National Museum of Ireland. As the archaeologist Henry Morris recorded in 1904, in August 1850 a woman found this brooch in Drogheda. She then sold it onto an antiques dealer, who named it the Tara brooch due to “the

wonderful and regal style of its ornamentation”, and from there it went to the National Museum of Ireland.<sup>93</sup> The brooch then became very famous and was displayed at Exhibitions, including the 1851 Great Exhibition in London. The flurry of interest around this and similar brooches created a fashion trend and “Tara Broch” became a catch-all for items in this traditional style. It is almost certain that Molly Ivors’ brooch is one of these imitations, yet she clearly sees this as a piece of jewellery as resistance clothing, celebrating a mythic Irish history: the Celtic brooch has a history going back to ancient times.<sup>94</sup> As Joyce recognised Mrs Kearney’s dependence on nationalist commodity culture to support her cultural-political stance, so he does the same for Miss Ivors. Julia Panko notes that in the mid-nineteenth century Dublin jewelers began selling reproductions of Celtic ornaments, including the Tara Brooch.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, as she points out, the National Museum’s entanglement in commodity culture becomes explicit in “Circe”, with its “plaster figures, also naked, representing the new nine muses” among which are “Commerce, [...] Publicity, [and] Manufacture”.<sup>96</sup> The Tara Brooch, for Molly Ivors a symbol of her devotion to the nationalist movement, was also worn onstage as costume by some of the keenest promoters of Irish culture. In 1904, the Gaelic League organised some performances in America by the Irish dancer Sheila Kelly. As part of her costume she wore a Tara brooch; she was promoted by the Gaelic League for what it described as her “authenticity” and *Evening World* reported that she “will correct erroneous impressions gathered from the ‘stage’ Irishman”.<sup>97</sup> Kelly showed yet again the fragility of national identity, when bound up in clothing, using what Molly Ivors holds dear to perform a *brand* of Irishness.

Throughout *Ulysses* and *Dubliners*, Joyce considers the issues of nationalism, identity, and performance that clothing evokes. Always interested in the cultural contingency of clothes, in both categories of “costume” and “dress”, Joyce’s relationship with what is widely considered as Irish dress – even if, as the kilt and the Aran jumper show, the national origin

or cultural status of the garment might be overstated or anachronistic – is always ambivalent, sometimes satirical, and often provocative. A severely neglected topic, this article has highlighted the significance of clothing within Joyce’s work, and illustrated how extensively and suggestively how he uses garments to make political and social observations about Ireland. Moving between historical and literary readings of dress, considering the relationship between staged performances and metaphoric ones, this article demonstrates Joyce’s sustained interest in the unstable semiotics of clothing. Joyce’s fractious relationship with the literature and politics of the Revival, which is evident throughout his work, has long been noted by scholars; this article, by drawing attention to its material and sartorial aspects, has shown yet further how Joyce mined the culture of the Revival, even while keeping its politics at a distance.

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<sup>1</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 15.1721-1734.

Throughout *Ulysses* Bloom is sober and industrious, so the derogatory sense of the term, the stereotype of a lazy, drunk, and feckless Irishman, does not apply; when Joyce uses it as he does in “Circe”, the phrase suggests different to its usual meaning. Some readers have read the line as a compliment, though this is inconsistent with Lenehan’s criticism: Christy Burns claims that Bloom “is praised” by Paddy Leonard, and Alan Warren Friedman that Leonard “acclaim[s]” Bloom as a stage Irishman (Joyce, *Ulysses*, 15.1734; Burns, *Gestural Politics: Stereotype and Parody in Joyce* 43; Friedman, *Party Pieces: Oral Storytelling and Social Performance in Joyce and Beckett*, 99). Other readers, however, see the comment as an insult, though this is inconsistent with Hoppy Holohan’s apparent praise: Julieann Ulin notes that Bloom is “rejected” by Leonard (Ulin, “‘Famished Ghosts’: Famine Memory in James Joyce’s *Ulysses*”, 54). There is surely some irony in a character named Paddy being the one to deliver this verdict, and doing so while on a stage himself.

Interpretation of the line also partly depends on how one reads the relationship between Joyce and Dion Boucicault, the latter widely credited with changing – improving – the representation of the Irish on stage. Neither Burns nor Friedman explicitly mention Boucicault in their assessments of the line. The Stage Irishman was especially popular on the theatre and music hall stages throughout the nineteenth century: Paddy Leonard’s comment is made moments after Bloom performs a music hall sketch “with rollicking humour”. Boucicault’s influence is apparent in several places in Joyce’s work: he is named explicitly in “Lestrygonians” (8.601). Stephen’s mother rises through a floorboard and the man in the macintosh springs up from a trapdoor (15.4157, 15.1558), moments directly lifted from Boucicault’s *The Corsican Brothers* (1852); Joyce reuses this sketch in *Finnegans Wake* (“cometh up as a trapadour”, 224.25).

<sup>2</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 15.1490, 15.1521 (both original italics).

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<sup>3</sup> Though 'galoshes' is the conventional spelling, I have stuck to Joyce's idiosyncratic spelling here.

<sup>4</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 13.931; 15.3441.

<sup>5</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 1.113.

<sup>6</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 15.2249-50 (original italics).

<sup>7</sup> Kershner, "ReOrienting Joyce", 260.

<sup>8</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 177.

<sup>9</sup> Geczy, *Fashion and Orientalism*, 11.

<sup>10</sup> Hyde, "The Necessity for de-Anglicising Ireland", 157-8.

<sup>11</sup> Huck, "Clothes make the Irish: Irish dressing and the question of identity", 280.

<sup>12</sup> Jaster, "'Out of All Frame and Good Fashion': Sartorial Resistance as Political Spectacle", 44-57.

<sup>13</sup> Daly, *Social and Economic History of Ireland since 1800*, 63; for an economic history of Irish linen production see Bielenberg, chapter one.

<sup>14</sup> Daly, *Social and Economic History of Ireland since 1800*, 72.

<sup>15</sup> Bielenberg, *Ireland and the Industrial Revolution: the impact of the industrial revolution on Irish industry, 1801-1922*, 3.

<sup>16</sup> Daly, *Social and Economic History of Ireland since 1800*, 72.

<sup>17</sup> Daly, *Dublin: The Deposed Capital, A Social and Economic History: 1860-1914*, 42.

<sup>18</sup> The field of Irish dress history is a small one. The earliest recognised work is Joseph Cooper Walker, *An Historical Essay on the Dress of the Irish* (1788). Following this, there was a long gap in scholarly work in the field until H.F. McClintock's *Old Irish and Highland Dress, and That of the Isle of Man* (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1943). Since the 1950s, when the Irish fashion industry began to expand due to the international success of Sybil Connolly, work in the scholarly field also increased. See Síle de Cléir, "Creativity in the Margins: Identity and Locality in Ireland's Fashion Journey", 201-224; Chapter One in Elizabeth McCrum, *Fabrics and Form: Irish fashion since 1950*; Mairead Dunlevy, *Dress in Ireland*. Newspapers can be used as a guide to dress history, but they can also be unreliable. Little historical dress has survived, because fabrics decay with time, though a few outfits have been recovered from the bogs.

<sup>19</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 12.1240-57.

<sup>20</sup> Joyce, "Ireland, Island of Saints and Sages", 119, 125.

<sup>21</sup> "The Irish Industrial Exhibition", 135.

<sup>22</sup> "The Irish Industrial Exhibition", 139.

<sup>23</sup> "The Irish Industrial Exhibition", 139-40.

<sup>24</sup> "The Irish Industrial Exhibition", 143.

<sup>25</sup> "The Irish Industrial Exhibition", 143.

<sup>26</sup> Síle de Cléir provides a good summary of the CDB and the prominent women involved in promoting clothes made from these fabrics. See de Cléir, "Creativity in the Margins: Identity and Locality in Ireland's Fashion Journey", 204-6. Chapter four of Joanna Bourke's *Husbandry to Housewifery: Women, Economic Change, and Housework in Ireland, 1890-1914* considers in detail the rise and decline of the home industries, with an emphasis on textiles. The home industries were in Donegal, Cork, Limerick, Wexford, Down, Monaghan, and Londonderry, which is to say, not Dublin. This is one reason why they are relatively absent from *Ulysses*; compounding this, most of this activity took place in the 1880s, two decades before the novel is set.

<sup>27</sup> Helland, *British and Irish Home Arts and Industries, 1880-1914: Marketing Craft, Making Fashion*. See also Alex Ward "Dress and National Identity: Women's Clothing and the Celtic Revival", 193-212, for case studies of the women involved in these projects.

<sup>28</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 9.569.

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- <sup>29</sup> Some can be seen in this image, dated 1880-1900, by zooming in: <http://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000251024> (accessed 15th March 2017).
- <sup>30</sup> Barry, "Aran of the Saints", 490.
- <sup>31</sup> Haddon and Browne, "The Ethnography of the Aran Islands, County Galway", 814.
- <sup>32</sup> <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/136631?redirectedFrom=pampootie#eid> accessed 15<sup>th</sup> March 2017.
- <sup>33</sup> Synge, *The Aran Islands*, 66, 79.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid., 14.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid., 15, 85.
- <sup>36</sup> See for example Barry, "Aran of the Saints", 490; Blackman, "Colouring the Claddagh: A Distorted View?", 213-235.
- <sup>37</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 9.1155.
- <sup>38</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 12.172; Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*, 417.12; Joyce, *Ulysses*, 14.1212.
- <sup>39</sup> Fogarty, "Ghostly Intertexts: James Joyce and the Legacy of Synge", 232-5.
- <sup>40</sup> Lecossois, "Pampooties and Keening: Alternate Ways of Performing Memory in J. M. Synge's Plays", 142-4.
- <sup>41</sup> Holloway, 52.
- <sup>42</sup> Geczy, *Fashion and Orientalism*, 12.
- <sup>43</sup> A garment more commonly discussed in reference to *Playboy* is of course the "shift", the mention of this garment considered by many to be the precipitating factor of the riots. However, the significance of the shift specifically within the play's controversy has been overstated.
- <sup>44</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 15.1882; Joyce, *Ulysses*, 15.3305 (both original italics).
- <sup>45</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 15.2178; Platt, "*Ulysses* 15 and the Irish Literary Theatre", 47; see Pinkerton, "The Highland Kilt and the Old Irish Dress", for the origination of feile beg, 321.
- <sup>46</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 15.1740; Synge, 15.
- <sup>47</sup> Joyce, "The Mirage of the Fisherman of Aran", 204.
- <sup>48</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 16.6555-6.
- <sup>49</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 15.1805; 15.1804-10.
- <sup>50</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 15.1355.
- <sup>51</sup> Carden, "Cable Crossings: The Aran Jumper as Myth and Merchandise", 262; de Cléir, 206.
- <sup>52</sup> Joyce visited the Abbey on 8 September 1909, just six months after the death of Synge in March that year. Of his visit, Joseph Holloway recalled "He has translated Synge's play *Riders to the Sea* for the love of the thing [...] I asked him how he liked the acting of the company, and he said, 'Well'". Holloway, *Abbey Theatre: A Selection from his unpublished journal "Impressions of a Dublin Playgoer"*, 130-1.
- <sup>53</sup> Carden, "Cable Crossings: The Aran Jumper as Myth and Merchandise", 261.
- <sup>54</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 15.1960-2 (original italics).
- <sup>55</sup> Platt, "*Ulysses* 15 and the Irish Literary Theatre", 54.
- <sup>56</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 12.166-7.
- <sup>57</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 16.1637.
- <sup>58</sup> Cheng, *Joyce, Race, and Empire*, 241.
- <sup>59</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 16.1638.
- <sup>60</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 12.168-205.
- <sup>61</sup> Joyce, *A Smaller Social History of Ancient Ireland*, especially "Dress and Costume".
- <sup>62</sup> Joyce, *A Smaller Social History of Ireland*, 386, 394.
- <sup>63</sup> Berry, "Costume in Ancient Ireland", 42.
- <sup>64</sup> Quoted in Berry, "Costume in Ancient Ireland", 44.
- <sup>65</sup> MacAdam, "Ancient Leather Cloak", 298.

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- <sup>66</sup> Pinkerton, "The Highland Kilt and the Old Irish Dress", 317-8.
- <sup>67</sup> Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, 151.
- <sup>68</sup> Dublin Historic Industry Database, presented to Geological Survey of Ireland, January 2011, 6.
- <sup>69</sup> Berry, "Costume in Ancient Ireland", 40.
- <sup>70</sup> Berry, "Costume in Ancient Ireland", 41; see also MacAdam, "Ancient Leather Cloak", 293.
- <sup>71</sup> Reports on the origin of the kilt vary. Some, like Kiberd, claim it was invented by an English tailor (Kiberd, 151; Pinkerton, "The Highland Kilt and the Old Irish Dress", 316). Others claimed that the kilt was the invention "of the Highland Irish, and should be just left to them" (Sigma, "Irish Costume", 4). See also Hayes-McCoy, "Irish Dress and Irish Pictures", 304.
- <sup>72</sup> Pinkerton, "The Highland Kilt and the Old Irish Dress", 320 (original italics).
- <sup>73</sup> Nolan, *James Joyce and Nationalism*, 96-112; Gibson, *Joyce's Revenge: History, Politics, and Aesthetics in Ulysses*, 107-26.
- <sup>74</sup> As if to stress the performative superficiality of the Citizen's outfit, Joyce uses the same techniques as he does in his description of Gerty MacDowell's outfit. Both descriptions feature an almost bewildering amount of detail and information regarding textures, fabrics, and production techniques. This excess also includes colour: as Gerty wears "electric" and "eggblue" shades, so the Citizen opts for "lichen" purple; both also have their legs "encased" in garments. Making the artificiality of the Citizen's get up explicit, Joyce ends by noting his cudgel "rudely fashioned" from stone, the equivalent, surely, to Gerty's "slightly shopsoiled" fabric.
- <sup>75</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 12.173-199.
- <sup>76</sup> Curran, *United Irishman*, 19<sup>th</sup> November 1904. Cited in Bourke, 138.
- <sup>77</sup> The concept of the stage Irishwoman has attracted far less critical commentary than the stage Irishman, however see especially: M. Alison Kibler, "The Stage Irishwoman", 5-30 and Chapter Five of Jennifer Mooney, *Irish stereotypes in Vaudeville, 1865-1905*.
- <sup>78</sup> Kibler, "The Stage Irishwoman", 7.
- <sup>79</sup> Nolan, *James Joyce and Nationalism*, 167.
- <sup>80</sup> Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland*, 152.
- <sup>81</sup> Osteen, "Seeking Renewal: Bloom, Advertising, and the Domestic Economy", 719.
- <sup>82</sup> Richards, *The commodity culture of Victorian England: advertising and spectacle, 1851-1914*, 240. See also Chapter One of Strachan and Nally, *Advertising, Literature and Print Culture in Ireland, 1891-1922*.
- <sup>83</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, 136.
- <sup>84</sup> Brady, *Dublin through Space and Time*, 314.
- <sup>85</sup> Liddy, *Dublin be Proud*, 124.
- <sup>86</sup> Rains, *Commodity culture and social class in Dublin 1850-1916*, 97.
- <sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.
- <sup>88</sup> Advertisement, *Irish Times*, 14<sup>th</sup> September 1903, 3.
- <sup>89</sup> Rains, *Commodity culture and social class in Dublin 1850-1916*, 97.
- <sup>90</sup> For more on this, see Alex Ward, "Dress and National Identity: Women's Clothing and the Celtic Revival", 193-212, especially 202.
- <sup>91</sup> Joyce, *Dubliners*, 187.
- <sup>92</sup> Eide, "Gender & Sexuality", 80.
- <sup>93</sup> Morris, 'The Tara Brooch', 22.
- <sup>94</sup> Berry, "Costume in Ancient Ireland", 40.
- <sup>95</sup> Panko, "Curating the Colony: Museums in *Ulysses*", 360.
- <sup>96</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 15.1707-8.

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<sup>97</sup> Mooney, *Irish stereotypes in Vaudeville, 1865-1905*, 132.

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